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DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Appropriations Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 3rd, 2020

HB 921 – Dentists Saliva Lead Screening Tests Scope of Practice and Requirements

Honorable Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

I am happy to introduce to you House Bill 921 Dentists Saliva Lead Screening Tests Scope of Practice and Requirements. This bill slightly expands the scope of practice for dentists in the state of Maryland. It allows for a dentist to collect an oral saliva sample to screen for lead poisoning in any patient under the age of 19.

Exposure to lead has been a continuing major health problem in the United States that has not been fully addressed and still affects the lives of many Marylanders. One needs only look at Flint, Michigan to see the devastation this can cause. The adverse effects of exposure to lead have been known for hundreds of years. However, we have only recently discovered how devastating these effects really are. Lead interferes with the development of the neurological systems and untreated lead exposure can lead to developmental disabilities and behavioral disorders which are believed to be irreversible.

In addition to the hugely negative effects of exposure to this heavy metal, the levels of exposure to minority groups is disproportionately large. Expanding access to screening services is not only a boon to public health outcomes, but to addressing a social inequity.

Thank you for your time and consideration of HB 921.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pat Young, 44B